THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLABULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The information required is given below:

(Value in US $ million)

	(APRIL—SEPTEMBER)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
1. Total Exports	11620.6	14609.6	16139.8
2. Total Imports	12851.1	17046.9	17952.9
3. POL & Product Imports	2650.3	3115.9	4427.8
4. Trade Deficit	−1230.5	−2437.3	−1813.1

Source: date from DGCI&S, Calcutta.

(d) The key to reducing trade deficit lies in acelerated export growth. Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through policy and promotional schemes. These include simplification of Export Import Policy Procedures, improving efficiency and competitiveness, focussing on quality and technology upgradation and efforts to involve actively the State Governments in export promotion. Export promotion is a continuing activity based on inter-action with industry, trade and other promotional institutions.

Impact of delicensing of electronic goods industry

1689. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to end licencing controls on the production of "entertainment electronic goods";

(b) the items covered by the decision;

(c) to what extent it will affect the Indian industry; and

(d) whether any protection will be given to it to bear the onslaught of major companies?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have delicensed all items of entertainment electronic industry.

(c) and (d) The latest technology trends indicate convergence of consumer electronics with information technology and professional electronics. Delicensing of entertainment electronic industries would provide greater freedom to the entrepreneurs to take investment and technology decision in the industrial sector which would contribute to greater industrial growth and employment.

Dental of benefits by the Industries under ESI Act to their employees

1690. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that many of the industries in the country such as M/s Formix Industries, Punnathura, Ellumannow, Kerala are showing reluctance to give the benefits of ESI Act to their employees and with the connivance of the officials who are bound to implement the Act avoiding it; and

(b) whether Government would take steps to find out the companies which are avoiding the implementation of the Act and take action against them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) The ESI Act, 1948 is not applicable to

seasonal factories defined under the Act. M/s. Formix Industries, Punnathura, Kerala was treated as not coverable under the Act for some time because it engaged in manufacturing of rubber. The matter came to notice and has been examined and it has since been decided to enforce the ESI Act in all the seasonal factories including M/s. Formix Industries which are working for a period exceeding seven months in a year. No case of connivance of the ESI Corporation.

(b) Yes, Sir. Such companies are detected in the course of periodical surveys which is an ongoing process.

Rate of industrial growth

1691. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rate of industrial growth has shown a decline during April-July, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken by Government to bring the growth rate at par with the previous rate;

(d) whether employment in the organised industrial sector has also shown a comparable decline in the current year; and

(e) if so, the remedial measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As per Index of Industrial Production, the overall industrial production in April—July, 1996-97 has recorded a growth of 9.3% as compared to growth rate of 12% recorded in the corresponding period of last year. The deceleration in industrial growth is confined to a few sectors particularly, the crude petroleum, fertilizers and power generation etc.

(c) Sector-specific strategies have been initiated to remove constraints in the underperforming sectors. Adequate credit with softened interest rates assured to industries through the recently announced busy season credit policy are providing further impetus to growth.

(d) There is no evidence to suggest that employment in the organised industrial sector has shown any decline in the current year.

(e) Does not arise.

Closure of iron ore mines in Orissa

1692. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of iron ore mines closed down in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts in Orissa;

(b) the date(s) of the closure of those mines;

(c) the approximate number of workers engaged in those iron ore mines;

(d) the steps taken to provide alternative employment to those workers who have been through out of employment; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) As per information available from Govt. of Orissa, three Iron Ore mines have been closed down recently in Keonjhar District. There is no report of closing down of any mine in Mayurbhanj